

Henry Taber House
115 Orchard Street
New Bedford
Bristol County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-677

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MASS-677

HENRY TABER HOUSE

Address: 115 Orchard Street, New Bedford, Bristol County,
Massachusetts.

Present Owner: John H. Read, 115 Orchard Street, New Bedford,
Massachusetts.

Present occupant: John H. Read and family

Present Use: Private residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: A representative mansion of nineteenth century
New Bedford, built for a prominent ship captain
and ship owner, with Greek Revival features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Built for Captain Henry Taber; now owned by John H. Read.
2. Date of erection: 1846 [Interview with Mrs. Read]
3. Notes on alterations and additions: At an undetermined date, more than 75 years ago, a partition between the two south rooms on the first floor was removed, making the area one room. [Interview with Mrs. Read, who cited recollections of old inhabitants to the effect that the area had been a single room during their lifetime. Marks on the ceiling and the cornice indicate the former existence of a partition.]
4. Important old views and references: The Atlas of New Bedford City, Massachusetts (Boston: George H. Walker and Company, 1881), plate 7, shows the house located as at present, and the same size and shape, in general.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A spacious house of Colonial type with refined Greek Revival details on the entrance doorway and porches.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 45' square, with rear wing and porches in addition. Front on the east. Two-and-one-half stories. Three-bay front.

2. Foundations: Granite, low.

3. Wall construction: Wood frame, covered with narrow lapped siding. Wide antae at corners.

4. Porches: Over the front entrance is a small one-story porch, with Greek Corinthian columns, fluted, with entablature, of wood. A delicate wrought iron railing, painted white, crowns the porch. The floor and steps are granite.

Along the south side is a one-story porch, with four Corinthian columns, similar to those of the entrance porch. The entablature and railing are also similar.

5. Chimneys: Two on the south wall, two on the north wall, all with hoods. One on the ridge of the rear wing. All are of brick.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Front doorway has leaded side lights and an elliptical fan-light; paneled door.

b. Windows and shutters: Openings have a simple cornice; sash are wood, double hung, six light over six lights. Muntins are very slender. In the center of the north and south gables are triple windows, one in each gable, with a semicircular panel over the central opening; sash lights two light over two light, six light over six light, two light over two light. Windows have louvred shutters. Triple windows on first floor, front, and over entrance doorway.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Main part, gable roof; rear wing hipped. The covering appears to be asbestos cement shingles.

b. Cornice: A full entablature, related to the corner antae, carries around the main part of the house, with pediments at the gable ends.

- c. Dormers, cupola: There are no dormers. There is a low square cupola on the center of the ridge.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: First Floor: Central entrance and hall, with a straight flight of stairs; two rooms on north side, one long room on south side (this area was formerly divided into two rooms). Rear service wing.
2. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster.
3. Doorways and doors: These appear largely original; six-panel doors.
4. Trim: Simple wood trim on door and window openings. Sliding inside shutters for front windows, apparently original.
5. Heating: A fireplace in each main room. Modern central heating is used now.

D. Site

1. General Setting and orientation: This neighborhood, when built up in the 1830's and 1840's, was one of large lots; subsequently these have been subdivided, and houses of the 1870's and 20th century interposed between the earliest ones. The neighborhood still conveys an effect of spaciousness and greenery. The house faces east, and must have commanded a fine view of the water when it was first built.
2. Enclosures: A cast iron fence, with granite posts and base, extends across the front on Orchard Street.
3. Outbuildings: An 1881 atlas indicates a wooden outbuilding at the southwest corner of the lot, reached from Irving Street.
4. Landscaping: There is no indication of the original landscaping.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
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